The Monist. 1903. 13 (4).

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BIOGRAPHY

CAGLIOSTRO—A STUDY IN CHARLATANISM.

"Mundus vult decipi, ergo decipiatur."—*Latin Proverb.*

"The pseudo-mystic, who deceives the world because he knows that the world wishes to be deceived, becomes an attractive subject for psychological analysis."—Hugo Münsterberg: *Psychology and Life.*

I.

MY favorite haunt in Paris is the Quai Voltaire, because of the delightful book-stalls that line its parapet, presided over by the quaintest of Norman bouquinistes. The second-hand literature of the world may be found here. Amid the flotsam and jetsam of old books tossed upon this inhospitable shore of literary endeavor, many a precious Elzevir and Aldus has been picked up. On a pleasant summer day, while strolling along the Quai, I chanced upon a rare volume, entitled: *Vie de Joseph Balsamo, connu sous le nom de Comte Cagliostro. Traduite d'apres l'original italien, imprime à la chambre Apostolique; enriche de notes curieuses, et ornée de son portrait. Paris et Strasbourg, 1791.* Yes, here was the biography of the famous necromancer of the old *régime*, the prince of charlatans, who foretold the fall of the Bastille, the bosom friend of the Cardinal de Rohan, and founder of the Egyptian Rite of Freemasonry. Fascinated with the subject of magic and magicians, I visited the Bibliothèque Nationale and dipped into the literature on Cagliostro. Subsequently, at the British Museum, I examined the rare brochures and old files of the *Courier de l'Europe* for information concerning the incomparable necromancer, who made use of hypnotism, and, like Mesmer, performed many strange feats of

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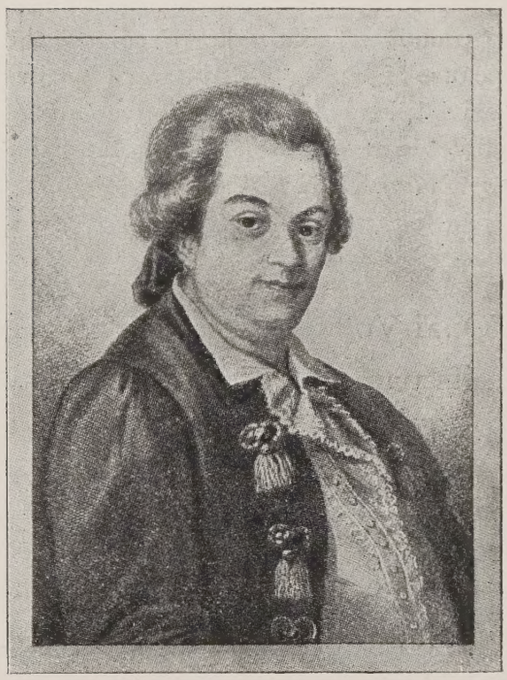
pseudo-magic. Goethe and Catherine II. wrote plays about him, Alexander Dumas made him the hero of a dozen novels, and Thomas Carlyle philosophised concerning him. To understand Cagliostro, one must understand the times in which he lived and acted his strange world-drama, its philosophical and religious background.

The arch-enchanter appeared on this mortal scene when the times were "out of joint." It was the latter part of that strange, romantic eighteenth century of scepticism and credulity. The old



From a painting in the Versailles Historical Gallery.

After an engraving which served as a frontispiece of Balsamo's Life, published in 1791.

JOSEPH BALSAMO, KNOWN AS COUNT CAGLIOSTRO.

world like a huge Cheshire cheese was being nibbled away from within, until little but the rind was left to tell the tale. The rotten fabric of French society in particular was about to tumble down in the sulphurous flames of the Revolution, and the very people who were to suffer most in the calamity were doing their best to assist in the process of social and political disintegration, seemingly careless of the impending storm whose black clouds were slowly gathering. The more sceptical the age, the more credulity extant. Man begins by denying, and then doubts his doubts. Charles Kingsley says: "And so it befell, that this eighteenth century, which is usu-

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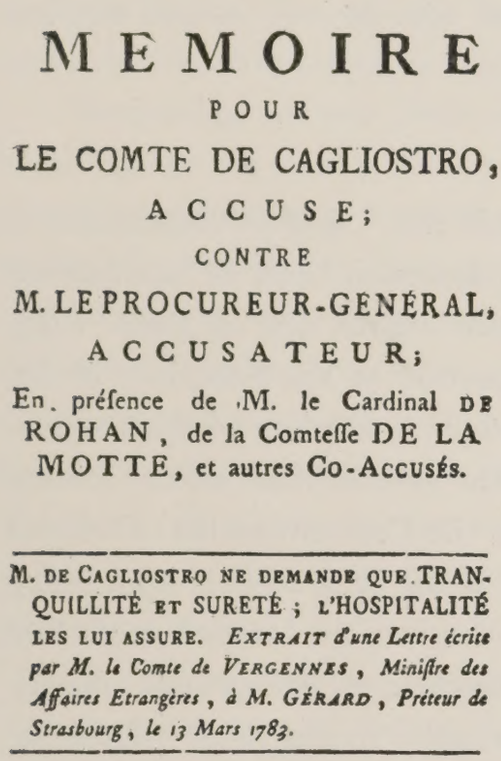
ally held to be the most 'materialistic' of epochs, was in fact a most 'spiritualistic' one." The soil was well fertilised for the coming of Cagliostro, the sower of superstition. Every variety of mysticism appealed to the imaginative mind. There were societies of illuminati, Rosicrucians, alchemists, and Occult Freemasons.

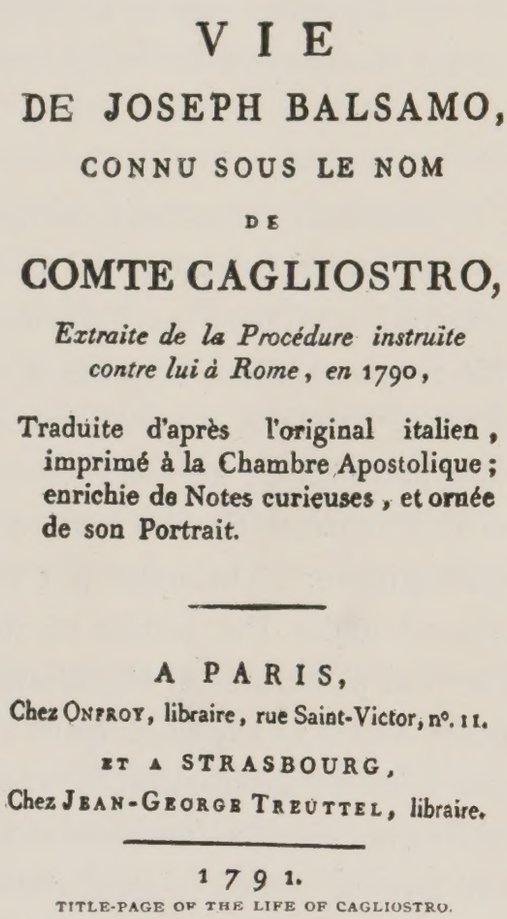
Speaking of the great charlatan, the Anglo-Indian essayist Greeven says: "It is not enough to say that Cagliostro posed as a magician, or stood forth as the apostle of a mystic religion. After



MEMOIRE
POUR
LE COMTE DE CAGLIOSTRO,
ACCUSE;
CONTRE
M. LE PROCUREUR-GENÉRAL,
ACCUSATEUR;
En présence de M. le Cardinal DE ROHAN, de la Comtesse DE LA MOTTE, et autres Co-Accusés.

M. DE CAGLIOSTRO NE DEMANDE QUE TRANQUILLITÉ ET SURETÉ; L'HOSPITALITÉ LES LUI ASSURE. *EXTRAIT d'une Lettre écrite par M. le Comte de VERGENNES, Ministre des Affaires Etrangères, à M. GÉRARD, Préteur de Strasbourg, le 13 Mars 1783.*

1786.
TITLE-PAGE OF THE DEFENSE OF CAGLIOSTRO.



VIE
DE JOSEPH BALSAMO,
CONNU SOUS LE NOM
DE
COMTE CAGLIOSTRO,
Extraite de la Procédure instruite contre lui à Rome, en 1790,
Traduite d'après l'original italien, imprimé à la Chambre Apostolique; enrichie de Notes curieuses, et ornée de son Portrait.

A PARIS,
Chez ONFROY, libraire, rue Saint-Victor, n°. 11.
ET A STRASBOURG,
Chez JEAN-GEORGE TREUTTEL, libraire.

1791.
TITLE-PAGE OF THE LIFE OF CAGLIOSTRO.

all, in its mild way, our own generation puts on its evening dress to worship at the feet of mediums, whose familiar spirits enable them to wriggle out of ropes in cupboards, or to project cigarette papers from the ceiling [*à la* Madame Blavatsky]. We ride our hobby, however, only when the whim seizes us, and, as soon as it wearies, we break it in pieces and fling it aside with a laugh. But Cagliostro impressed himself deeply on the history of his time. He flashed on the world like a meteor. He carried it by storm. Princes and nobles thronged to his 'magic operations.' They prostrated

themselves before him for hours. His horses and his coaches and his liveries rivalled a king's in magnificence. He was offered, and refused, a ducal throne. No less illustrious a writer than the Empress of Russia deemed him a worthy subject of her plays. Goethe made him the hero of a famous drama. A French Cardinal and an English Lord were his bosom companions. In an age which arrogated to itself the title of *the philosophic*, the charm of his eloquence drew thousands to his Lodges, in which he preached the mysteries of his *Egyptian ritual*, as revealed to him by the Grand-Kophta under the shadow of the pyramids."

II.

And now for a brief review of his life. Joseph Balsamo, the son of Peter Balsamo and Felicia Braconieri, both of humble extraction, was born at Palermo, on the eighth day of June, 1743. He received the rudiments of an education at the Seminary of St. Roche, Palermo. At the age of thirteen, according to the Inquisition biographer, he was intrusted to the care of the Father-General of the Benfratelli, who carried him to the Convent of that Order at Cartagirone. There he put on the habit of a novice, and, being placed under the tuition of the apothecary, he learned from him the first principles of chemistry and medicine. He proved incorrigible and was expelled from the monastry in disgrace. Then began a life of dissipation in the city of Palermo. He was accused of forging theatre-tickets and a will. Finally he had to flee the city for having duped a goldsmith named Marano of sixty pieces of gold, by promising to assist him in unearthing a buried treasure by magical means. The superstitious Marano entered a cavern situated in the environs of Palermo, according to instructions given to him by the enchanter, and discovered, not a chest full af gold, but a crowd of Balsamo's confederates, who, disguised as infernal spirits, administered to him a terrible castigation. Furious at the deception, the goldsmith vowed to assassinate the pretended sorcerer. Balsamo, however, took wing to Messina, where he fell in with a strolling mountebank and alchemist named Althotas, or Altotas, who spoke a variety of languages. They travelled to Alexandria in

Egypt, and finally brought up at the island of Malta. Pinto, the Grand Master of the Knights of Malta, was a searcher after the philosopher's stone, an enthusiastic alchemist. He extended a warm reception to the two adventurers, and took them under his patronage. They remained for some time at Malta, working in the laboratory of the deluded Pinto. Eventually Althotas died, and Balsamo went to Naples, afterwards to Rome, where he married a beautiful girdle-maker, named Lorenza Feliciani. Together with a swindler calling himself the Marchese d'Agliata, he had a series of disreputable adventures in Italy, Spain, and Portugal.

Unmasked at one place he fled in hot haste to another. Behold him on his travels with coach-and-four, flunkies and outriders in gorgeous liveries, vehicles filled with baggage and paraphernalia; all alchemists, magicians, and masons must have paraphernalia—retorts, crucibles, alembics, baquets, disguises, mirrors, draperies, candelabra, sashes, swords, etc., etc. Best of all he carries with him an iron coffer, which contains the silver, gold, and jewels reaped from princely dupes. Behold the Arch-Master of Egyptian Masonry, the hero of the Pyramids, the Rosicrucian reputed to be able to make himself invisible, fleeing from the police in fashion prosaic.

In 1776 he arrived in London. He had assumed various aliases during the course of his life, but now he called himself the "Conte di Cagliostro," borrowed from an aunt, who bore the name without the title. His beautiful wife called herself the "Countess Serafina Feliciani." Cagliostro announced himself as a worker of wonders, especially in medicine. He carried about two mysterious substances—a red powder, known as his "Materia Prima," with which he transmuted baser metals into gold, and his "Egyptian Wine," with which he prolonged life.

He dropped hints that he was the son of the Grand-Master Pinto of Malta and the Princess of Trebizonde. He foretold the lucky numbers in a lottery and got into difficulty with a gang of swindlers, which caused him to flee from England to avoid being imprisoned. While in London he picked up, at a second-hand book-stall, the mystic writings of an obscure spiritist, one George

Cofton, or Coston, "which suggested to him the idea of the Egyptian ritual"; and he got himself initiated into a masonic lodge, so say the pamphleteers. It is asserted that he received the degrees of the Blue Lodge in the month of April, 1776, in the Esperance Lodge, No. 369, held at the King's Head Tavern; but there is no documentary evidence in support of this statement. It is difficult to say where Cagliostro was initiated into the degrees of freemasonry. I have had some correspondence with masonic scholars in England and on the Continent, but they have been able to shed no light on the subject. Cagliostro is regarded as the greatest masonic imposter of the world. His pretensions were bitterly repudiated by the English members of the fraternity, and many of the Continental lodges. But the fact remains that he made thousands of dupes. As Grand Master of the Egyptian Rite he leaped at once into fame. His swindling operations were now conducted on a gigantic scale. He had the entrée into the best society. According to him, freemasonry was founded by Enoch and Elias. It was open to both sexes. Its present form, especially with regard to the exclusion of women, is a corruption. The true form was preserved only by the Grand Kophta, or High Priest of the Egyptians. By him it was revealed to Cagliostro. The votaries of any religion are admissible, subject to these conditions, (1) that they believe in the existence of a God; (2) that they believe in the immortality of the soul; and (3) that they have been initiated into common Masonry. The candidate must swear an oath of secrecy, and obedience to the Secret Superiors. It is divided into the usual three grades of Apprentice, Fellowcraft, and Mastermason.

In this system he promised his followers "to conduct them to *perfection*, by means of a *physical and moral regeneration;* to enable them by the former (or physical) to find the *prime matter*, or Philosopher's Stone, and the *acacia*, which consolidates in man the forces of the most vigorous youth and renders them immortal; and by the latter (or moral) to procure them a Pantagon, which should restore man to his primitive state of innocence, lost by original sin."

The meetings of the Egyptian lodges were nothing more than

spiritualistic séances, during which communications were held with the denizens of the celestial spheres, and many mysteries unfolded of time and eternity. The medium was a young lad or a girl, who is in the state of innocence, called the *Pupil* or the *Colomb*. Cagliostro declared Moses, Elias, and Christ to be the Secret Superiors of the Order. "They have attained to such perfection in masonry that, exalted into higher spheres, they are able to create fresh worlds for the glory of the Lord. Each is still the head of a secret community."

No wonder the Egyptian Rite became popular among lovers of the marvellous, for it promised its votaries, who should attain to perfection, or adeptship, the power of transmuting baser metals into gold, or prolonging life indefinitely by means of an elixir; communion with the spirits of the dead, telepathy, etc.

Cagliostro often boasted of his great age. He claimed to have been one of the guests at the marriage feast at Cana and to have witnessed the Crucifixion. From England he went to the Hague, where he inaugurated a lodge of female masons, over which his wife presided as Grand Mistress. Throughout Holland he was received by the lodges with masonic honors—beneath "arches of steel." He discoursed volubly upon magic and masonry to enraptured thousands. In March, 1779, he made his appearance at Mitau, in the Baltic Provinces, which he regarded as the stepping-stone to St. Petersburg. He placed great hope in Catherine II. of Russia—"the avowed champion of advanced thought." He hoped to promulgate widely his new and mysterious religious cult in the land of the Czars, with all the pomp and glamour of the East. The nobility of Kurland received him with open arms. Some of them offered to place him on the ducal throne, so he claimed. He wisely refused the offer. Cagliostro eventually made a fiasco at Mitau and left in hot haste. In St. Petersburg his stay was short. Catherine II. was too clever a woman to be his dupe. She ordered the charlatan to leave Russia, which he forthwith did. Prospects of Siberia doubtless hastened his departure. In May, 1780, he turned up at Warsaw. A leading prince lodged him in his palace. Here Cagliostro "paraded himself in the white

shoes and red heels of a noble." His spirit séances were not a success. He chose as his clairvoyant a little girl, eight years of age. After pouring oil into her hands, he closed her in a room, the door of which was hung with a black curtain. The spectators sat outside. He interrogated the child concerning the visions that appeared to her. Among other tests, he requested the spectators to inscribe their names on a piece of paper which he appeared to burn before their very eyes. Calling to the child that a note would flutter down at her feet, he requested her to pass it to him through the door. He passed his hand through the opening of the door to receive the note. In the next instant he produced a note closed with a freemason's seal, which contained the signatures of each of the spectators. This was nothing more than the trick of a prestidigitateur, such as was performed by Philadelphia and Pinetti, the two great sleight-of-hand artists of the period. The next day the clairvoyant confessed the fact that she had been tutored by the magician, and that the visions were but figments of the imagination. Cagliostro secured a new subject, a girl of sixteen, but had the folly to fall in love with his accomplice. In exasperation she repeated the confession of her predecessor. The Polish nobles now insisted that Cagliostro invoke the spirit of the Grand Kophta (the Egyptian High Priest). This séance took place "in a dark room, on a sort of stage, lit with two candles only, and filled with clouds of incense." The Grand Kophta appeared. Through the uncertain light the spectators beheld an imposing figure in white robes and turban. A snowy beard fell upon its breast.

"What see ye?" cried in a hoarse voice the sage of the pyramids.

"I see," replied a sceptical gentleman from the audience, "that Monsieur le Comte de Cagliostro has disguised himself with a mask and a white beard."

Everybody recognised the portly figure of the vision. A rush seemed imminent. Quick as thought, the Grand Kophta, by a wave of his hands, extinguished the two candles. A sound followed as the slipping off of a mantle. The tapers were relit. Cagliostro was observed sitting where the sage had disappeared.

At Wola, in a private laboratory, he pretended to transmute mercury into silver. The scene must have been an impressive one. Girt with a freemason's apron, and standing on a black floor marked with cabalistic symbols in chalk, Cagliostro worked at the furnace. In the gloom of twilight the proceedings were held. By a clever substitution of crucibles, Cagliostro apparently accomplished the feat of transmutation, but the fraud was detected the next morning, when one of the servants of the house discovered the original crucible containing the mercury, which had been cast upon a pile of rubbish by the pretended alchemist, or one of his confederates.

In September, 1780, Cagliostro arrived at Strasburg. Here he was received with unbounded enthusiasm. He lavished money right and left, cured the poor without pay, and treated the great with haughtiness. Just outside of the city he erected a country villa in Chinese architecture, wherein to hold his Egyptian lodges. This place was long pointed out as the Cagliostræum. The peasants are said to have passed it with uncovered heads, such were their admiration and awe of the great wonder-worker. At Strasburg resided at that time the Cardinal Louis de Rohan, who was anxious to meet the magician. Cagliostro, to whom the fact was reported, said: "If the Cardinal is sick, he may come to me and I will cure him; if he is well, he has no further need of me, nor I of him." Cardinal de Rohan, enormously rich, a libertine, an amateur dabbler in alchemy and the occult sciences, was now more anxious than ever to become acquainted with the charlatan. Such disdain on the part of a layman was a new experience to the haughty churchman. His imagination, too, was fired by the stories told of the enchanter. The upshot of it was that Cagliostro and the Cardinal became bosom friends. The prelate invited the juggler and his wife to live at his episcopal palace.

The Baroness Oberkirch who saw him there says in her memoirs: "No one can ever form the faintest idea of the fervor with which everybody pursued Cagliostro. He was surrounded, besieged; every one trying to win a glance or a word....A dozen ladies of rank and two actresses had followed him in order to con-

tinue their treatment.... If I had not seen it, I should never have imagined that a Prince of the Roman Church, a man in other respects intelligent and honorable, could so far let himself be imposed upon as to renounce his dignity, his free will, at the bidding of a sharper."

Cagliostro said to the Cardinal one day: "Your soul is worthy of mine, and you desire to be the confidant of all my secrets." He presented the Cardinal with a diamond worth 20,000 francs which he pretended to have made, the churchman claiming to have been an eye-witness of the operation. The Cardinal said to the Baroness: "But that is not all; he makes gold: he has made five or six thousand francs worth before me, up there in the top of the palace. I am to have more; I am to have a great deal; he will make me the richest prince in Europe. These are not dreams, madame; they are proofs. And his prophecies that have come true! And the miraculous cures that he has wrought! [*He really cured the Cardinal of the asthma.*] I tell you, he is the most extraordinary man, the sublimest man in the world."

Finally he bade adieu to Strasburg, and set out for Lyons in great pomp, with lackeys, grooms, guards armed with battle-axes, and heralds garbed in cloth of gold, blowing trumpets. In the year 1785 he founded at Lyons the Lodge of Triumphant Wisdom, and made many converts to his mystical doctrines. The fame of his Egyptian masonry reached Paris and created quite a stir among the lodges. The chiefs of a masonic convocation assembled in Paris wrote to him for information concerning his new rite. He scornfully refused to have anything to do with them, unless they burned all their masonic books and implements as useless trash and acknowledged their futility, claiming that his Egyptian Rite was the only true freemasonry and worthy of cultivation among men of learning. His next move was to the French Capital.

Cagliostro's greatest triumph was achieved at Paris. A gay and frivolous aristocracy, mad after new sensations, welcomed the magician with open arms. The way had been paved for him by St. Germain and Mesmer. He made his appearance in the French Capital January 30, 1785. Fantastic stories were circulated about

him. The Cardinal de Rohan selected and furnished a hotel for him, and visited him three or four times a week, arriving at dinner time and remaining until an advanced hour in the night. It was said that the great Cardinal assisted the sorcerer in his labors, and many persons spoke of the mysterious laboratory where gold bubbled and diamonds sparkled in crucibles brought to a white heat. But nobody except Cagliostro, and perhaps the Cardinal, ever entered that mysterious laboratory. All that was known for a certainty was that the apartments were furnished with Oriental splendor, and that Count Cagliostro in a dazzling costume received his guests with kingly dignity, and gave them his hand to kiss. Upon a black marble slab in the antechamber carved in golden letters was the universal prayer of Alexander Pope. "Father of all! in every age," etc., the parody of which ten years later Paris sang as a hymn to the Supreme Being.

Says Funck-Brentano in *The Diamond Necklace*:[1] "At Paris Cagliostro showed himself what he had been at Strasburg, dignified and reserved. He refused with haughtiness the invitations to dinner sent to him by the Count of Artois, brother of the king, and the Duke of Chartres, prince of the blood. He proclaimed himself chief of the Rosicrucians, who regarded themselves as chosen beings placed above the rest of mankind, and he gave to his adepts the rarest pleasure.... To all who pressed him with questions as to who he was, he replied in a grave voice, knitting his eyebrows and pointing his forefinger towards the sky, 'I am he who is'; and as it was difficult to make out that he was 'he who is not,' the only thing was to bow with an air of profound deference.

"He possessed the science of the ancient priests of Egypt. His conversation turned generally on three points: (1) Universal Medicine, of which the secrets were known to him. (2) Egyptian Freemasonry, which he wished to restore, and of which he had just established a parent lodge at Lyons, for Scotch masonry, then predominant in France, was in his eyes only an inferior, degenerate form. (3) The Philosopher's Stone, which was to ensure the transmutation of all the imperfect metals into fine gold.

[1] Translated by H. S. Edwards, Philadelphia, 1901.

"He thus gave to humanity, by his universal medicine, bodily health; by Egyptian masonry, spiritual health; and by the philosopher's stone, infinite wealth." These were his principal secrets, but he had a host of others, that of predicting the winning numbers in lotteries; prophesying as to the future; softening marble and restoring it to its pristine hardness; of giving to cotton the lustre and softness of silk, which has been re-invented in our day by a chemical process.

Among the many stories told of Cagliostro, that of the supper in the hotel of the Rue Saint Claude, where the ghosts made merry, still holds the record. Six guests and the host took their places at a round table upon which there were thirteen covers. Each guest pronounced the name of the dead man whose spirit he wished to appear at the banquet table. Cagliostro, concentrating his mysterious forces, gave the invitation in a solemn and commanding tone. One after another the six guests appeared. They were the Duc de Choiseul, Voltaire, d'Alembert, Diderot, the Abbe de Voisenon, and Montesquieu.

"When the living diners recovered their breath, the conversation began, but, unfortunately for the great ghosts, the record of their conversation makes them talk stupid nonsense. Perhaps this may be taken as evidence of the theory that a man loses his head when he dies. At all events, the story created a sensation in Paris. It reached the court, and one evening, when the conversation turned upon the banquet of the ghosts, the king frowned, shrugged his shoulders, and resumed his game of cards. The queen became indignant, and forbade the mention of the name of the charlatan in her presence. Nevertheless, some of the light-headed ladies of the court burned for an introduction to the superb sorcerer. They begged Lorenza Feliciani to get him to give them a course of lectures or lessons in magic to which no gentlemen were to be admitted. Lorenza replied that he would consent, provided there were thirty-six pupils. The list was made up in a day, and a week afterward the fair dames got their first lesson. But they talked of it, and of course the story got loose. This caused another scandal, and consequently the first lesson was the last."

Cagliostro's Egyptian Rite of Masonry was well received in Paris, especially the lodge for ladies, which was presided over by the beautiful Lorenza, his wife. It was appropriately called *Isis*. Among the members of this female lodge were the Countesses de Brienne, Dessalles, de Polignac, de Brissac, de Choiseul, d'Espinchal, the Marchioness d'Avrincourt, and Mmes. de Loménie, de Genlis, de Bercy, de Trevières, etc.

Cagliostro lived like a lord, thanks to the revenues obtained from the initiates into his masonic rite, and the money which he unquestionably received from his dupe, the Cardinal de Rohan, who was magic mad.

"His wife," says a gossipy writer, "was rarely seen, but by all accounts she was a woman of bewildering beauty, realising the Greek lines in all their antique purity and enhanced by an Italian expression. The most enthusiastic of her so-called admirers were precisely those who had never seen her face. There were many duels to decide the question as to the color of her eyes, some contending that they were black, and others that they were blue. Duels were also fought over a dimple which some admirers insisted was on the right cheek, while others said that the honor belonged to the left cheek. She appeared to be no more than twenty years old but she spoke sometimes of her eldest son, who was for some years a captain in the Dutch army."

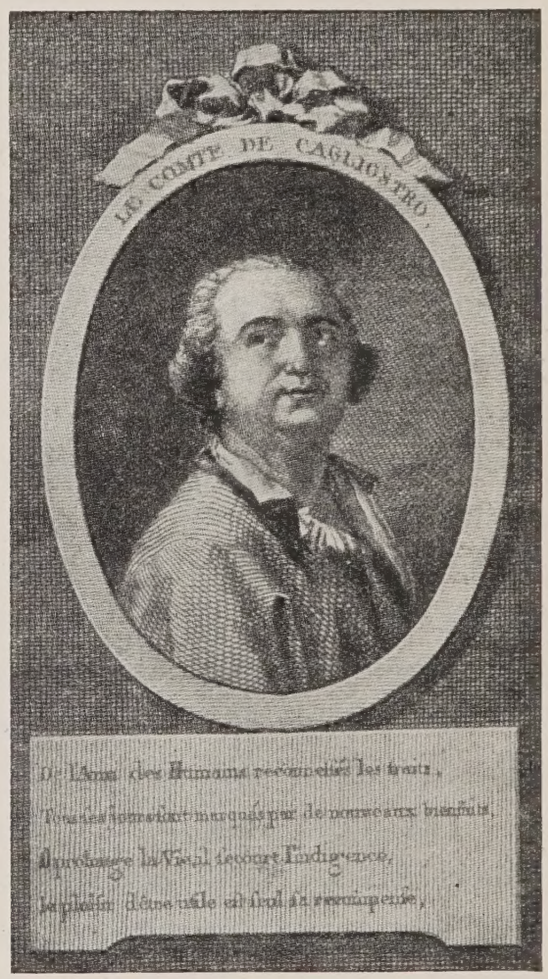
The magician's sojourn in Paris caused the greatest excitement. Prints, medallions, and marble busts of him were to be seen everywhere. He was called by his admirers "the divine Cagliostro." To one of the old portraits was appended the following verse:

"De l'Ami des Humains reconnaissez les traits:
Tous ses jours sont marqués par de nouveaux bienfaits,
Il prolonge la Vie, il secourt l'indigence;
Le plaisir d'être utile est seul sa récompense."

Hats and neckties were named after him. In Paris as in Strasburg, he gave away large sums of money to the poor and cured them of their ailments free of charge. His mansion was always crowded with noble guests. The idle aristocracy could find noth-

ing better to do than attend the spirit séances of the charlatan. The shades of Voltaire, Rousseau, and other dead celebrities were summoned from the "vasty deep," impersonated doubtless by clever confederates in the pay of Cagliostro, often aided by mechanical and optical accessories. The art of phantasmagoria, in which the concave mirror plays a part, was well known to the enchanter. The Count de Beugnot gives in detail, in his interest-

BUST OF CAGLIOSTRO.
After Houdon.
(In the possession of M. Storelli.)



CAGLIOSTRO.
From *Vie de Joseph Balsamo, etc*
Paris, 1791.

ing autobiography, an account of Cagliostro's performances at the residences of Madame de la Motte and the Cardinal De Rohan. Abridged by Saint Amand, we have the following statement: "As a sorcerer, he [Cagliostro] had a cabalistic apparatus. On a table with a black cloth, on which were embroidered in red the mysterious signs of the highest degree of the Rosicrucians, there stood the

emblems; little Egyptian figures, old vials filled with lustral waters, and a crucifix very like, though not the same as, the Christian's cross; and there, too, Cagliostro placed a glass globe filled with clarified water. Before the globe he used to place a kneeling seer; that is to say, a young woman who, by supernatural powers, should behold the scenes which were believed to take place in the water within the magic globe."

In the mysticism of the twentieth century this would be called *Crystal Vision* or *Crystal Gazing*. Cagliostro added to the *mise-en-scène* of the occasion by appearing in gorgeous robes. He would make mesmeric passes over the youthful clairvoyant, and summon the geniuses of the earth, air, and water, and the angels of the spheres, to enter the globe. "The seer became convulsed, she ground her teeth, and exhibited every sign of nervous excitement. At last she saw and began to speak. What was taking place that very moment hundreds of miles from Paris, in Vienna or St. Petersburg, in Austria or Pekin," etc. "It would be hard," says Count Beugnot, "to believe that such scenes could have taken place in France at the end of the eighteenth century; yet they aroused great interest among people of importance in the Court and the town."

An interesting pen portrait of Cagliostro is contained in Beugnot's memoirs. The Count met the enchanter for the first time at the house of Madame de la Motte:

"Cagliostro was of medium height, rather stout, with an olive complexion, a very short neck, round face, two large eyes on a level with the cheeks, and a broad, turned-up nose.... His hair was dressed in a way new to France, being divided into several small tresses that united behind the head, and were twisted up into what was then called a club.

"He wore on that day an iron-gray coat of French make, with gold lace, a scarlet waistcoat trimmed with broad Spanish lace, red breeches, his sword looped to the skirt of his coat, and a laced hat with a white feather, the latter a decoration still required of mountebanks, tooth-drawers and other medical practitioners, who proclaim and retail their drugs in the open air. Cagliostro set off this

costume by lace ruffles, several valuable rings, and shoe-buckles which were, it is true, of antique design, but bright enough to be taken for real diamonds.... The face, attire, and the whole man made an impression on me that I could not prevent. I listened to the talk. He spoke some sort of medley, half French and half Italian, and made many quotations which might be Arabic, but which he did not trouble himself to translate. I could not remember any more of [his conversation] than that the hero had spoken of heaven, of the stars, of the Great Secret, of Memphis, of the high-priest, of transcendental chemistry, of giants and monstrous beasts, of a city ten times as large as Paris, in the middle of Africa, where he had correspondents."

III.

Cagliostro was at the height of his fame, when suddenly he was arrested and thrown into the Bastille. He was charged with complicity in the affair of the Diamond Necklace. Here is his own account of the arrest: "On the 22d of August, 1786, a commissarie, an exempt, and eight policemen entered my home. The pillage began in my presence. They compelled me to open my secretary. Elixirs, balms, and precious liquors all became the prey of the officers who came to arrest me. I begged the commissarie to permit me to use my carriage. He refused! The agent took me by the collar. He had pistols, the stocks of which appeared from the pockets of his coat. They hustled me into the street and scandalously dragged me along the boulevard all the way to the rue Notre-Dame du-Nazareth. There a carriage appeared which I was permitted to enter to take the road to the Bastille."

What was this mysterious affair of the Diamond Necklace which led to his incarceration in a state prison? In brief the story is as follows:

The court jeweler, M. Böhmer, had in his possession a magnificent diamond necklace, valued at 1,800,000 livres originally designed for the ivory neck of the fair but frail Madame Du Barry, mistress of Louis XV. But Louis—"the well beloved"—died before the necklace was completed; the Sultana went into exile, and

the unlucky jeweler found himself with the diamond collar on his hands instead of on the neck of the Du Barry. He was obliged to dispose of it, or become a bankrupt. Twice he offered it to Marie Antoinette, but she refused to purchase it, or permit her husband, Louis XVI., to do so, alleging that France had more urgent need of war ships than jewels. Poor Böhmer, distracted at her refusal to buy the necklace, threatened to commit suicide. The matter became food for gossip among the *quid nuncs* of the Court. Unfortunate necklace, it led to one of the most romantic intrigues of history, involving in its jeweled toils a Queen, a cardinal, an adventuress, a courtesan, and a conjurer. Living at the village of Versailles at the time was the Countess de la Motte, an ex-mantua maker, and a descendant of an illegitimate scion of the Valois family, who had committed a forgery under Louis XIII. Her husband was a sort of gentleman-soldier in the gendarmerie; a gambler and a rake. Madame de la Motte-Valois, boasting of the royal blood that flowed in her veins, had many times petitioned the King to assist her. A small pension had been granted, but it was totally inadequate to supply her wants. She wished also to gain a foothold at Versailles and flutter amidst the butterfly-countesses of the *Oeil de Boeuf.* Looking about for a noble protector, some one who could advance her claims, she pitched upon the Cardinal de Rohan who was Grand Almoner of the King. He supplied her with money, but accomplished very little else for her. Though Grand Almoner and a Cardinal, Louis de Rohan was *non persona grata* at the court. He was cordially detested by Marie Antoinette not only because of his dissolute habits, but on account of slanderous letters he had written about her when she was still a Dauphiness. This coldness on the part of the Queen caused the Cardinal great anguish, as he longed to be Prime Minister, and sway the destinies of France through the Queen like a second Mazarin. More than that he loved the haughty Antoinette. All these things he confided to Madame de la Motte. When the story of Böhmer and the Diamond Necklace was noised abroad, Madame de la Motte conceived a plot of wonderful audacity. She determined to possess the priceless collar and make the Cardinal the medium of obtaining it. She de-

luded the Cardinal into the belief that she was in the Queen's confidence. She asserted that Marie Antoinette had at last yielded to her pleadings for recognition as a descendant of the Valois and granted her social interviews. She confided to him that the Queen secretly desired to be reconciled to him. She became the pretended "go-between" between the Cardinal and the Queen, and delivered numerous little notes to him, signed "Antoinette de France." Finally she arranged an interview for him, at night, in the park of Versailles, ostensibly with the Queen, but in reality with a young girl named D'Oliva who bore a remarkable resemblance to Marie Antoinette. The D'Oliva saw him only for a few moments and presented him with a rose. The Cardinal was completely duped. "Madame de la Motte persuaded him," says Greeven, "into the belief that the Queen was yearning for the necklace, but, as she could not afford it, he could assure himself of her favor by becoming security for the payment. She produced a forged instrument, which purported to have been executed by the Queen, and upon which he bound himself as security." The necklace was delivered to the Cardinal, who handed it over to Madame de la Motte, to be given to Marie Antoinette.

But, asks the curious reader, what has all this to do with Cagliostro? What part had he to play in the drama? This: When the Comtesse de la Motte was arrested, she attempted to throw the blame of the affair upon the Cardinal and Cagliostro. She alleged that they had summoned her into one of their mystic séances. "After the usual hocus-pocus, the Cardinal made over to her a casket containing the diamonds without their setting, and directed her to deliver them to her husband, with instructions to dispose of them at once in London. Upon this information Cagliostro and his wife were arrested. He was detained, without hearing, from the 22d of August, 1785, until the 30th of January, 1786, when he was first examined by the Judges, and he was not set at liberty till the 1st of June, 1786."

The trial was the most famous in the annals of the Parliament. Cagliostro and the Cardinal were acquitted with honor. The Countess de la Motte was sentenced to be exposed naked, with a

rope around her neck, in front of the Conciergerie, and to be publicly whipped and branded by the hangman with the letter V (*Voleuse—thief*) on each shoulder. She was further sentenced to life imprisonment in the prison for abandoned women. She escaped from the latter place, however, to London, where she was killed on the 23d day of August, 1791, by a fall from a window. The Count de la Motte was sentenced *in contumacium*. He was safe in London at the time and had disposed of the diamonds to various dealers. The d'Oliva was set free without punishment. The man who forged the letter for Madame de la Motte, her secretary Vil-

MADAME DE LA MOTTE'S ESCAPE. (After an English print of 1790.)

lette, was banished for life. Countess Cagliostro was honorably discharged.

The Cardinal was unquestionably innocent, as was fully established at the trial. His overweening ambition and his mad love for Marie Antoinette had rendered him an easy dupe to the machinations of the De la Mottes. But how was it with Cagliostro? The essayist Greeven, in an article published a few years ago in the *Calcutta Review*, seems to think that the alchemist was more or less mixed up in the swindle. He sums up the suspicions as follows:- "*First*, his [Cagliostro's] immense influence over the Cardinal, and his intimate relations with him, render it impossible that

so gigantic a fraud could have been practiced without his knowledge. *Second,* he was in league with the Countess for the purpose of deceiving the Cardinal, in connection with the Queen." M. Frantz Funck-Brentano, in his admirable history of the Diamond Necklace, based upon documents recently discovered in Paris [page 283, Edwards's translation, Philadelphia, 1901]: "The idea of implicating Cagliostro in the intrigue had been conceived, as Georgel says, with diabolical cunning. If Jeanne de Valois had in the first instance made a direct accusation against Cardinal de Rohan, no one would have believed in it. But there was something mysterious and suspicious about Cagliostro, and it was known what influence he exercised on the mind of the Cardinal. 'The alchemist,' she suggested, 'took the necklace to pieces in order to increase by means of it the occult treasures of an unheard-of fortune.' 'To conceal his theft,' says Doillot [Madame de la Motte's lawyer], 'he ordered M. de Rohan, in virtue of the influence he had established over him, to sell some of the diamonds and to get a few of them mounted at Paris through the Countess de la Motte, and to get more considerable quantities mounted and sold in England by her husband.'....Cagliostro had one unanswerable argument: the Cardinal had made his agreement with the jewelers on the 29th of January, 1785, and he, Cagliostro, had only arrived in Paris at nine in the evening of the 30th."

Cagliostro refuted the charges with wonderful *sang froid.* He appeared in court "proud and triumphant in his coat of green silk embroidered with gold." "Who are you? and whence do you come?" asked the attorney for the crown.

"I am an illustrious traveller," he answered bombastically. Every one present laughed.

Cagliostro drove in triumph from the court house to his residence, after hearing his order of discharge. His coach was preceded by "a fantastic cripple, who distributed medicines and presents among the crowd." He found the Rue St. Claude thronged with friends and sympathisers, anxious to welcome him home. At this period revolutionary sentiments were openly vented by the people of France. The throne was being undermined by the phi-

losophers and politicians. Any excuse was made to revile Louis XVI. and his queen. Scurrilous pamphlets were published declaring that Marie Antoinette was equally guilty with the de la Mottes in the necklace swindle. Cagliostro consequently was regarded as a martyr to the liberties of man. His arrest under the detested *lettre-de-cachet*, upon mere suspicion, and long incarceration in the Bastille without trial, were indeed flagrant abuses of justice and gave his sympathisers a whip with which to lash the King and Court.

His wife had been liberated some time before him. She met him at the door of the temple of magic, and he swooned in her arms. Whether this was a genuine swoon or not, it is impossible to say, for Cagliostro was ever a *poseur* and never neglected an opportunity for theatrical effect and self-advertisement. He accused the Marquis de Launay, Governor of the Bastille—he who had his head chopped off and elevated upon a pike a few years later—of criminal misappropriation of his effects, money, medicines, alchemical powders, elixirs, etc., etc., which he valued at a high sum. The Commissioner of Police who arrested him was also included in this accusation. He appealed to his judges, who referred him to the Civil Courts. But the case never came to trial. The day after his acquittal he was banished from France by order of the King. At St. Denis, "his carriage drove between two dense and silent lines of well-wishers, while, as his vessel cleared from the port of Boulogne, five thousand persons knelt down on the shore to receive his blessing." He went direct to London. No sooner there, than he filed his suit against the Marquis de Launay, "appealing, of course, to the hearts of all Frenchmen as a lonely and hunted exile." The French Government, through its ambassador, granted him leave to come in person to Paris to prosecute his suit, assuring him of safe conduct and immunity from all prosecution, legal as well as social. But Cagliostro refused this offer, hinting that it was merely a stratagem to decoy him to Paris and reincarcerate him in a dungeon. No clear-headed, impartial person believed that the Marquis de Launay was guilty of the charge laid at his door. Whatever else he may have been, tyrannical, cold, unsympathetic, the

Governor of the Bastille was a man of honor and above committing a theft. In fact, Cagliostro's accusation was a trumped-up affair, designed to annoy and keep open "a running sore in the side of the French authorities." Notoriety is the life of charlatanry. Cagliostro was no common quack, as his history shows. He next published a pamphlet, dated June 20th, 1786, prophesying that the Bastille would be demolished and converted into a public promenade; and, that a ruler should arise in France, who should abolish *lettres de cachet* and convoke the Estates-General. In a few years the prediction was fulfilled. Poor De Launay lost his life, whereupon Cagliostro issued a pamphlet exulting over the butchery of his enemy. In London, Cagliostro became the bosom friend of the eccentric Lord George Gordon. Eventually he became deeply involved in debt, and was obliged to pawn his effects. He was unable to impress the common-sense, practical English with his pretentions to animal magnetism, transcendental medicine, and occultism. One of his vaunted schemes was to light up the streets of London with sea water, which by his magic power he proposed to change into oil. The newspapers ridiculed him, especially the *Courier de l'Europe*, published and edited by M. Morande, who had "picked up some ugly facts about the swindler's early career." The freemasons repudiated him with scorn, and would have nothing to do with his Egyptian Rite. There is a rare old print, a copy of which may be seen in the Scottish Rite Library, Washington, D. C., which depicts the unmasking of the famous imposter at the Lodge of Antiquity, published Nov. 21, 1786, at London. It was engraved by an eye-witness of the scene. In company with some French gentlemen, Cagliostro visited the Lodge one evening. At the banquet which followed the working of the degree, a certain worthy brother named Mash, an optician, was called upon to sing. Instead of a post-prandial ditty, he gave a clever imitation of a quack doctor selling nostrums, and dilating bombastically upon the virtues of his elixirs, balsams (Balsamos), and cordials. Cagliostro was not slow in perceiving that he was the target for Brother Mash's shafts of ridicule. His "front of brass," as Carlyle has it, was beaten in, his pachyderm was penetrated by the barbed arrows

of the ingenious optician's wit. He left the hall in high dudgeon, followed by the jeers of the assembled masons. Alas, for the Grand Kophta, no "vaults of steel," no masonic honors for him in London.

CAGLIOSTRO UNMASKED AT THE LODGE OF ANTIQUITY, LONDON.
From a rare print in the possession of the Supreme Council, A. A. S. R., Washington, D. C.

The verse appended to the engraving of Cagliostro and the English lodge is as follows:

"Born, God knows where, supported, God knows how,
From whom descended, difficult to know.
Lord Crop adopts him as a bosom friend,
And manly dares his character defend.

This self-dubb'd Count, some few years since became
A Brother Mason in a borrow'd name;
For names like *Semple* numerous he bears,
And Proteus like, in fifty forms appears.
'Behold in me (he says) Dame Nature's child,
'Of Soul benevolent, and Manners mild;
'In me the guiltless Acharat behold,
'Who knows the mystery of making Gold;
'A feeling heart I boast, a conscience pure,
'I boast a Balsam every ill to cure;
'My Pills and Powders, all disease remove,
'Renew your vigor, and your health improve.'
This cunning part the arch imposter acts,
And thus the weak and credulous attracts,
But now, his history is rendered clear,
The arrant hypocrite, and quack appear.
First as *Balsams*, he to paint essay'd,
But only daubing, he renounc'd the trade.
Then, as a Mountebank, abroad he stroll'd
And many a name on Death's black list enroll'd.
Three times he visited the British shore,
And every time a different name he bore.
The brave Alsatians he with ease cajol'd
By boasting of Egyptian forms of old.
The self-same trick he practis'd at Bourdeaux,
At Strasburg, Lyons, and at Paris too.
But fate for *Brother Mash* reserv'd the task
To strip the vile impostor of his mask,
May all true Masons his plain tale attend
And Satire's lash to fraud shall put an end."

To escape the harpies of the law, who threatened him with a debtor's prison, Cagliostro fled to his old hunting-ground, the Continent, leaving *la petite Comtesse* to follow him as best she could. But the game was played out. The police had by this time become fully cognisant of his impostures. He was forbidden to practise his peculiar system of medicine and masonry in Austria, Germany, Russia, and Spain. Drawn like a needle to the lodestone rock, he went to Rome. Foolish Grand Kophta! Freemasonry was a capital offence in the dominions of the Pope. One lodge, however, existed. Says Greeven: "There is reason to suppose that it was

tolerated only because it enabled the Holy Church to spy out the movements of freemasons in general." Cagliostro attempted to found one of his Egyptian lodges, but met with no success. His exchequer became depleted. He appealed to the National Assembly of France to revoke the order of banishment, on the ground of "his services to the liberty of France." Suddenly on the evening of Dec. 27, 1789, he and his wife were arrested and incarcerated in the fortress of San Angelo. His highly-prized manuscript of Egyptian masonry was seized, together with all his papers and correspondence. He was tried by the Holy Inquisition. It must have been an impressive scene—that gloomy council chamber with the cowled inquisitors. Cagliostro's wife appeared against him and lifted the veil of Isis that hid the Mysteries of the Charlatan's career. The Egyptian manuscript of unknown George Coston, the seals, the masonic regalia and paraphernalia were mute and damning evidences of his guilt. He was indeed a freemason, even though he were not an alchemist, a soothsayer, the Grand Kophta of the Pyramids. Cagliostro's line of defence was that "he had labored throughout to lead back freemasons, through the Egyptian ritual to Catholic orthodoxy." He appeared at first to be contrite. But it availed him nothing. Finding his appeals for mercy useless, he adopted another tack, and told impossible stories of his adventures. He harangued the Holy Fathers for hours, despite their threats and protests. Nothing could stop his loquacious tongue from wagging. Among other Münchausen tales, he related how he had visited the Illuminati of Frankfurt, when on his way to Strasburg. In an underground cavern, the secret Grand Master of Templars "showed him his signature under a horrible form of oath, traced in blood, and pledged him to destroy all despots, especially in Rome." Finally, he was condemned to death as a heretic, sorcerer, and freemason, but Pope Pius VI., on the 21st of March, 1791, commuted the sentence to life imprisonment. His manuscript was declared to be "superstitious, blasphemous, wicked, and heretical," and was ordered to be burnt by the common hangman, together with his masonic implements. From San Angelo, Cagliostro was conducted to the Castle of San Leon, Urbino. Here, in

a subterranean dungeon, he fretted away his life in silence and darkness, until 1795, when he died. A French inspector of Italian prisons, who visited the fortress of San Leon, March 6, 1795, reported that he saw a sentence and autograph scribbled upon the dungeon wall by Cagliostro. No one knows where the arch-enchanter is buried. His wife ended her days in a convent.

In the Inquisition biography some curious letters to Cagliostro from his masonic correspondents in France are published. They evidence the profound respect, one might almost say blind worship, with which he was regarded by his disciples.

The masonic lodge at Rome was disrupted shortly after Cagliostro's arrest. The Sbirri of the Holy Office pounced down upon it, but the birds had flown, taking with them their most important papers. Father Marcellus says that among the members of this Roman lodge were an Englishman and an American.

And so endeth the career of Cagliostro, one of the most romantic of history. His condemnation as a sorcerer and freemason has invested him with "the halo of a religious martyr, of which perhaps no one was less deserving."

Among his effects was found a peculiar seal, upon which were engraved the mysterious letters "L. P. D." These letters are supposed to stand for the Latin sentence, "*Lilia pedibus destrue*," which translated signifies: "Tread the lilies under foot,"—alluding to the overthrow of the French monarchy.

Many theosophical writers have placed implicit belief in the mission of Cagliostro as the secret agent of an occult brotherhood working for human liberty and regeneration.

Taking this idea for a theme, Alexander the Great—he of the pen, not of the sword—has built up a series of improbable though highly romantic novels about the personality of Cagliostro, entitled *The Memoirs of a Physician*, and *The Diamond Necklace*. He makes him the Grand Kophta of a society of Illuminati, or exalted Freemasons, which extends throughout the world. Pledged to the spread of equality, fraternity, and liberty among men, the Brotherhood seeks to overthrow the thrones of Europe, symbols of oppression and persecution. The *Memoirs of a Physician* opens with a re-

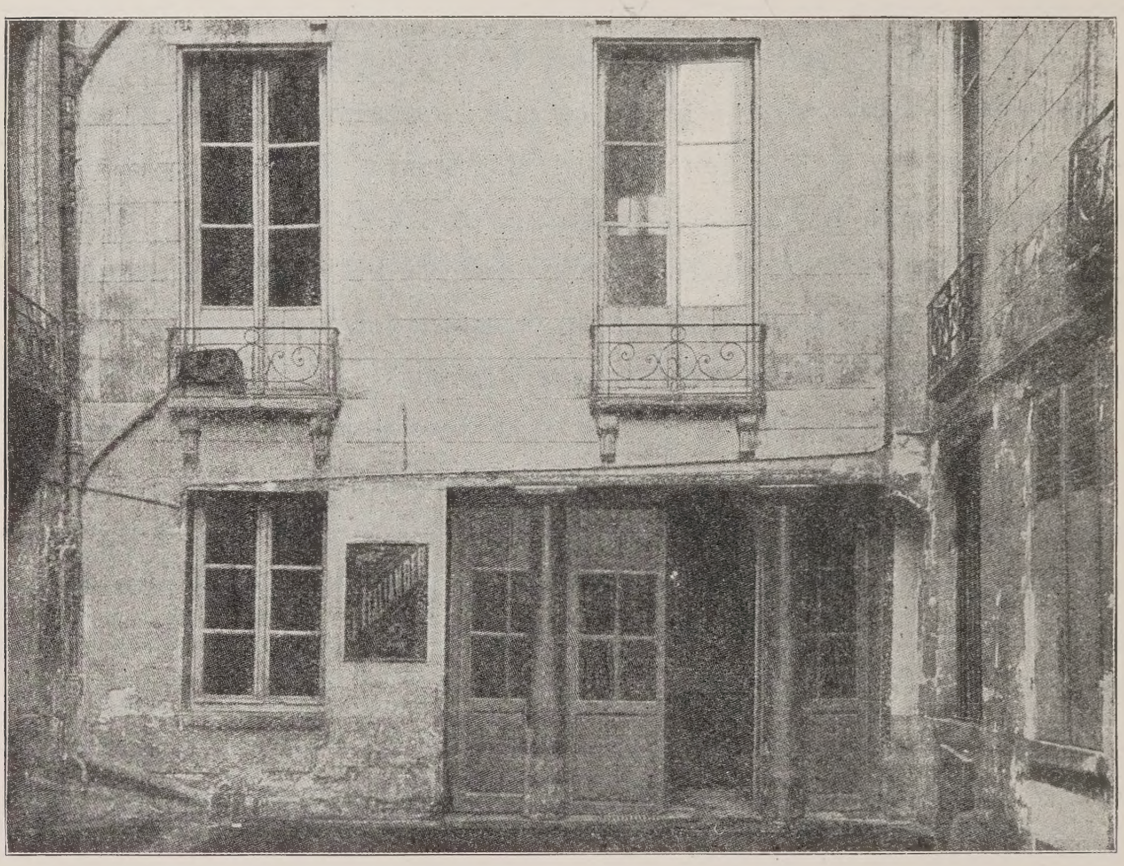
markable prologue, descriptive of a solemn conclave of the secret superiors of the Order. The meeting takes place at night in a ruined chateau located in a mountainous region near the old city of Strasburg. Cagliostro reveals his identity as the Arch-master of the Fraternity, the Grand Kophta, who is in possession of the secrets of the pyramids. He takes upon himself the important task of "treading the lilies under foot" and bringing about the destruction of the monarchy in France, the storm-centre of Europe. He departs on his mission. Like Torrini, the conjurer, he has a miniature house on wheels drawn by two Flemish horses. One part of the vehicle is fitted up as an alchemical laboratory, wherein the sage Althotas makes researches for the elixir of life. Arriving at the chateau of a nobleman of the *ancien régime*, Cagliostro magnetises a young lady and causes her to see in a carafe of water the death of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette by the guillotine. Aided by the freemasons of Paris, Cagliostro sets to work to encompass the ruin of the throne and to bring on the great Revolution. Dumas in this remarkable series of novels passes in review before us Jean Jacques Rousseau, Cardinal de Rohan, Louis XV. and XVI., Marie Antoinette, Comtesse du Barry, Madame de la Motte, Danton, Marat, and a host of people famous in the annals of history. Cagliostro is exalted from a charlatan into an apostle of liberty endowed with many noble qualities. He is represented as possessing occult powers, and his séances are depicted as realities. Dumas himself was a firm believer in spiritualism, and hobnobbed with the American medium Daniel D. Home.

Cagliostro's house in the Marais quarter, Paris, still remains—a memorial in stone of its former master. In the summer of 1899 the *Courier des États Unis*, New York, contained an interesting article on this mansion. I quote as follows:

"Cagliostro's house still stands in Paris. Few alterations have been made in it since the days of its glories and mysteries; and one may easily imagine the effect which it produced in the night upon those who gazed upon its strange pavilions and wide terraces when the lurid lights of the alchemist's furnaces streamed through the outer window blinds. The building preserves its noble lines in spite of modern additions and at the same time has a weird appearance which produces an almost depressing effect. But this doubtless comes from the imagination, be-

cause the house was not built by Cagliostro; he simply rented it. When he took up his quarters in it, it was the property of the Marquise d'Orvillers. Cagliostro made no changes in it, except perhaps a few temporary interior additions for the machines which he used in his séances in magic.

"The plan of the building may well be said to be abnormal. The outer gate opens upon the rue Saint Claude at the angle of the boulevard Beaumarchais. The courtyard has a morose and solemn aspect. At the end under a flagged porch there is a stone staircase worn by time, but it still preserves its old iron railing. On looking at that staircase, one cannot help thinking of the hosts of beautiful women, attracted by curiosity to the den of the sorcerer, and terrified at what they



COURTYARD OF CAGLIOSTRO'S HOUSE IN PARIS (PRESENT CONDITION).

imagined they were about to see, who placed their trembling hands upon that old railing. Here we can evoke the shade of Mme. de la Motte running up the steps, with her head covered with a cloak, and the ghosts of the valets of Cardinal de Rohan sleeping in the driver's seat of the carriage with a lantern at their feet, while their master, in company with the Great Kophta, is occupied with necromancy, metallurgy, cabala, or oneirocritics, which, as everybody knows, constitute the four elementary divisions of Cagliostro's art.

"A secret stairway now walled up ran near the large one to the second story, where its traces are found; and a third stairway, narrow and tortuous, still exists at the other end of the building on the boulevard side. It is in the center of the

wall, in complete darkness, and leads to the old salons now cut into apartments, the windows of which look out upon a terrace. Below, with their mouldering doors, are the carriage house and the stable,—the stable of Djérid, the splendid black horse of Lorenza Feliciani."

To verify the above statement, I wrote to M. Alfred de Ricaudy (an authority on archæological matters and editor of *L'Echo du Public*, Paris), who responded as follows, Jan. 13, 1900:

"The house still exists just as it was in the time of Cagliostro [the exterior]. Upon the boulevard, contiguous to the mansion, there was formerly the shop of one Camerlingue, a bookseller, now occupied by an upholsterer. On January 30, 1780, Cagliostro took up his residence in this quaint old house. It was then No. 30 Rue St. Claude, at the corner of the Boulevard Saint Antoine, afterwards the Boulevard Beaumarchais. The Marquise d'Orvillers was the owner of the premises occupied by the thaumaturgist of the eighteenth century. Her father, M. de Chavigny, captain in the royal navy, had built this house on ground acquired in 1719 from Mme. de Harlay, who had inherited it from her father, le Chevalier Boucherat. (See Lefeuve, *Old House of Paris*, Vol. IV., issue 51, page 24, published by Achille Faure, Paris, 1863.)"

Cagliostro's house is now No. 1, the numbering of the street having been altered during the reign of Louis Philippe. Says M. de Ricaudy:

"The numbering originally began at the Rue Saint Louis, now Rue de Turenne, in which is situated the church Saint Dennis du St. Sacrement. When the houses were re-numbered with reference to the direction of the current of the Seine (under Louis Philippe), the numbers of the Rue St. Claude, which is parallel to the river, began at the corner of the boulevard, and in that way the former number 30 became number 1."

The sombre old mansion has had a peculiar history. Cagliostro locked the doors of the laboratories and séance-rooms on the 13th of June, 1788, on the occasion of his exile from France. All during the great Revolution the house remained closed and intact. Eighteen years of undisturbed repose passed away. The dust settled thick upon everything; spiders built their webs upon the gilded ceilings of the salons. Finally, in the Napoleonic year 1810, the doors of the temple of magic and mystery were unfastened, and the furniture and rare curios, the retorts and crucibles, belonging to the dead conjurer were auctioned off. An idle crowd of curious *quid nuncs* gathered to witness the sale, and pry about. Says Ricaudy:

"The household furniture, belongings, etc., of the illustrious adventurer were not sold until five years after his death. The sale took place in the apartment which he had occupied, and was by order of the municipal government. An examination revealed many curious acoustical and optical arrangements constructed in the building by Cagliostro. By the aid of these contrivances and that of well-trained confederates, he perpetrated many supposedly magical effects, summoned the shades of the dead," etc. (See *Dictionnaire de la France.* By A. G. de St. Fargeau, Vol. III., page 245. Paris, 1851.)

The writer of the article in the *Courier des États Unis* further states:

"Since the auctioning of Cagliostro's effects the gloomy house of the Rue St. Claude has had no history. Ah, but I am mistaken. In 1855 some repairs were made. The old carriage door was removed, and the one that took its place was taken from the ruins of the Temple. There it stands to-day with its great bolts and immense locks. The door of the prison of Louis XVI. closes the house of Cagliostro."

M. de Ricaudy verifies this statement about the door of the mansion. The student of Parisian archæology will do well to consult M. de Ricaudy, as well as M. Labreton, 93 Boulevard Beaumarchais, who possesses forty volumes relating to the history of the Marais Quarter. Last but not least is the indefatigable student of ancient landmarks of Paris, M. G. Lenôtre, author of *Paris révolutionaire, vieilles maisons, vieux papiers.*

My friend, M. Félicien Trewey, who visited the place in the summer of 1901, at my request reported to me that it had been converted into a commercial establishment. A grocer, a feather curler, and a manufacturer of cardboard boxes occupied the building, oblivious of the fact that the world-renowned Cagliostro once lived there, plying his trade of sorcerer, mesmerist, physician, and mason, like a true *chevalier d'industrie.* Alas! the history of these old houses! They have their days of splendid prosperity, followed by shabby gentility and finally by sordid decay,—battered, bleareyed, and repulsive-looking.

HENRY RIDGELY EVANS.

WASHINGTON, D. C.